



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.1707 | FAX (517) 373.3935
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/toy/

For Immediate Release
August 15, 2005

Contact: Heather Lombardini
(517) 373-1707

Sen. Toy on DWSD: Radio system finances are ‘tip of the iceberg’

LANSING – In wake of recent *Detroit News* reports that the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, subsidized by metro-area ratepayers, plans to finance one third of the city of Detroit’s new \$130 million 800 MHz radio system, Senator Laura Toy, R-Livonia, has renewed her commitment seeking accountability in the system which supplies water to nearly half of all Michigan residents.

“I am outraged by this,” Senator Toy said. “I’m glad that *The Detroit News* has again brought these types of potential abuses to light, but I’m afraid the story goes much deeper than this. This is just the tip of the iceberg. There have been numerous problems with the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department involving delinquent accounts, rate increases, water main breaks and security lapses, many of which reach back more than 30 years. There is a pattern here, and unfortunately without some regional oversight it is destined to continue.”

Senator Toy introduced a bill this legislative session, Senate Bill 372, which calls for a regional water authority that would oversee rate-setting by the DWSD.

“There must be accountability in a system that supplies the water for almost half of our state’s population,” Senator Toy said. “I will continue to fight for transparency in the operations of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department.”

Senator Toy also introduced legislation in 2003 that would have created an independent regional authority to oversee administration of the department’s contracts totaling more than \$50,000, including contracts that establish rates for suburban customers.

Despite bipartisan support, the governor vetoed the legislation citing concerns it was unfair to the city of Detroit. Under Senator Toy’s bill, the city of Detroit would have maintained ownership of the system and continued to be in charge of its day-to-day operations.

“If my legislation had been signed into law, we wouldn’t be having this problem,” Senator Toy said.

SB 372 is currently before the Senate Committee on Local, Urban and State Affairs, which Senator Toy chairs.

###